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# Wreck of HIJMS I-180

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Laid down at the Yokosuka Navy Yard in early 1942 and commissioned into Imperial Japanese Navy service in January 1943, HIJMS I-180 was the fourth Kaidai VII Class Submarine to enter operation, assigned to Submarine Squadron 3, Division 22. Assigned to operate out of Truk Atoll, the I-180 and her crew departed on their first war patrol on April 10th, 1943 bound for Australian waters.

Notching two kills on her first patrol, the I-180 was returning to Australia on her second patrol when the Battle of Kolombangara forced her diversion to assist in recovery of men in the water. After rescuing several crewmen of the ill-fated Cruiser Jintsu, the I-180 arrived at Rabaul in July 1943 and was pressed into service in the Huon Peninsula campaign carrying out clandestine resupply runs in support of Japanese forces fighting the combined Australian and American forces in New Guinea at Lae, Finschafen and Sio through October. Heavily damaged by a direct bomb hit during an air raid while alongside a pier at Rabaul on October 15th, the I-180 was forced to depart Rabaul on the surface for a long and dangerous trip to Truk where she was repaired enough to steam for Japan, where she was under repair from November 1943 through January 1944. After an abortive voyage to Truk which ended in almost total engine failure and the loss of the Sub, I-180 returned to Japan and spent a further three months in the yard undergoing further refit before she was again ready for service.

Assigned to the Northern Waters Patrol, the I-180 departed Ominato on her fifth War Patrol on March 20th, 1944 bound for the Aleutian Islands. Some 30 days out of port, the I-180 came across an unescorted merchant ship heading North, the Liberty ship SS John Straub, and promptly torpedoed and sank her for her third kill of the war. Moving to a station near the sea lanes to Kodiak, the I-180 continued her patrol uneventfully for the next few days, and surfaced as normal after dark on April 25th to recharge her batteries. At 2230hrs, the surfaced submarine was picked up by the radar operator aboard the Destroyer Escort USS Gilmore (DE-18) at a range of 8,000 yards as she escorted a Kodiak-bound convoy of merchant ships. Going to general quarters and closing at flank speed to investigate the contact, the Gilmore was joined by her fellow escort USS Edward C. Daley (DE-17) when the surface contact suddenly disappeared.

Aboard I-180, sonar crews picked up the unmistakable sounds of high speed propellers closing on their position at roughly 4,000 yards distance, prompting the order to crash-dive the sub. Going deep, the I-180 eluded contact only momentarily before she was echo-located by the Gilmore and attacked with several spreads of 'hedgehog' anti-submarine mortars. For the next three hours, the crew of the I-180 managed to evade over 26 depth charges and 72 'hedgehog' mortars fired by the Gilmore, but a final string of 13 depth charges dropped at 0112hrs found their mark and detonated alongside and beneath the I-180's hull, sinking her with all hands on April 26th, 1944.

60°45'33"N 106°20'51.6"  
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807 LEWIS L. DYCHE 12.43 IFM 4.1.45: Struck by Japanese Kamikaze plane at Mindoro, Philippines (voyage USA/Mindoro - ammunition). Exploded and sank.

808 JOHN STRAUB 12.43 IFM 19.4.44: Reported to have broken in two 'with a noise like a violent explosion' due to a structural failure. Within seconds the boat deck was under water and in less than a minute the bow sank. The stern section sank some hours later, 20 miles off Sannak Island, south of Alaska peninsula, 54.22N 163.24W (voyage Seattle/Dutch Harbour/Attu - 25,000 drums of diesel oil and 9,000 drums of high-octane gasoline).

Note: For some forty years the loss of this vessel has been attributed to a brittle fracture in the shell plating, due to the Arctic cold. However, recent research of records in the Puget Sound area reveals that the 'violent explosion' - followed by a burst of white flame and a huge pillar of smoke - suffered by the ship was, in fact, caused by a torpedo from the Japanese submarine I.180, and this in an area which had, then, only recently been declared 'free of enemy submarines' by the US Navy.

The submarine was itself sunk a week later by the US destroyer escort GILMORE (DE 18), some 120 miles south west of Kodiak Island, Alaska, not far from where it sank the JOHN STRAUB.

809 WILBUR O. ATWATER 12.43 IFM 48: OYONNAX. 59: LEONIDAS VOYAZIDES. 65: TRIADA. 6.68: Scrapped Shanghai.

810 ISAAC McCOY 12.43 IFM 5.61: Scrapped Tampa, Florida.

811 JOHN W. DAVIS 12.43 IFM 8.61: Scrapped Mobile.

812 ENOS A. MILLS 12.43 IFM 7.61: Scrapped Tampa, Florida.

813 GRACE R. HEBARD 12.43 IFM 5.66: Scrapped Philadelphia.

814 JAMES B. MILLER 12.43 IFM 61: Scrapped Philadelphia.

815 RALPH BARNES 12.43 IFM 47: ST JAN. 51: ARTEMIDI. 52: PANTOKRATOR. 55: Lengthened at Kobe to 511½ ft (8,520 grt). 61: PANAGATHOS. 27.10.65: Aground off Ameland Island, Holland (voyage Rotterdam & Hamburg/USA - steel products). Abandoned. CTL. 70: Wreck remains 'in situ'.

816 GABRIEL FRANCHERE 12.43 IFM 47: ARGENTAN. 6.71: Scrapped Barcelona.